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ABSTRACT

A study of the issues involved in deciding whether to schedule kindergarten classes on a half day-every day or full day-alternate days schedule was requested by the Board of Education of the school district of Lodi, Wisconsin. A committee of teachers, administrators and parents undertook the study, which included interviews with early childhood specialists, teachers and administrators; visits to schools operating alternate day programs; a review of the professional literature; a review of studies conducted by other Wisconsin school districts, and solicitation of parents' views. The committee examined the information they gathered as it applied to the following 10 categories: curriculum, personnel, scheduling, effects on children, home-school communications, additional teaching materials, relationship to learning theory, parents' perceptions, transportation, and others. As the committee listed advantages and disadvantages in each category it became apparent that the disadvantages of alternate day scheduling far outweighed the advantages, not only in number but in impact on children. Consequently, the committee recommended that the present half day-every day kindergarten schedule be retained. (Author/MP)

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KINDERGARTEN SCHEDULING:

FULL DAY - ALTERNATE DAYS

or

HALF DAY - EVERY DAY

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A Report

Presented to the Board of Education of
the School District of Lodi

By

A Committee of Staff and
Administration of the District

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February 12, 1981

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KINDERGARTEN SCHEDULING:

FULL DAY - ALTERNATE DAYS

or

HALF DAY - EVERY DAY

PRESENTED BY

COMMITTEE:

Alice Hamre ------- Kndg. Teacher
Mary Jackson ------ Kndg. Teacher
Joan Stone -------- K-1 Transition Teacher
Karen Brewer ------ 1st Grade Teacher
Sharon Bader ------ 2nd Grade Teacher
Liz Hillestad ----- 2nd Grade Teacher
Helen Thompson ---- 2nd Grade Teacher
Mary Prokop ------- 3rd Grade Teacher
Cindy Heal -------- 5th Grade Teacher
Donna Peterson ---- Title I Teacher
Inara Rudmanis ---- Title I Teacher
Betsy Dunne ------- Music Teacher
Mary Fryman ------- Reading Specialist
Mary Clark-Stedman- Guidance Counselor
Joe Slaney -------- Curriculum Coordinator
Glen E. Schulz ---- Elementary Principal

Writer:

Glen E. Schulz, Elementary Principal

Editors:

Joe Slaney, Curriculum Coordinator
Mary Prokop, Teacher
John Sauerberg, Superintendent

PART I: THE QUESTION

The transportation committee of the Board of Education requested a review of the issues involved in kindergarten scheduling, namely a comparison of half day-every day scheduling with some alternative method such as a full-day program which meets every other day.

The primary motivating factor for this request was the realization that the mid-day bus runs necessitated by the present half day-every day schedule cost the district a sizeable sum of money and the committee wanted to explore the feasibility of eliminating this very visible expenditure from its budget.

The fact that the question is much larger than just the monetary concern was brought to the attention of the Board of Education by Superintendent Sauerberg in the Agenda Supplement for Dec. 11, 1980. The complexity of the question was exhibited by a brief outline of the research which would take place.[1]

In order to more clearly define the question it should be noted that there are three recognized patterns for scheduling kindergarten sessions. They are half day-every day, full day-alternate days and full day-every day. This report only looks at the first two options. Further it should be noted that within the second option, namely the full day-alternate days schedule there are several sub-options. These will be discussed in the text of the report.

The purpose of this report, then, is to examine the issues involved in changing from the present half day-every day schedule of kindergarten classes to a full day-alternate days schedule and to make a recommendation to the Board of Education based on this examination of the issues.

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PART II: THE STUDY COMMITTEE

The committee of sixteen staff members who designed and conducted this study are listed on the title page. Since some of the content of this report is subjective in nature, the writer feels that it would be of benefit to the reader to be somewhat acquainted with the background of the various contributors.

Residents of this district are no doubt familiar with Mrs. Hamre and Mrs. Jackson who have taught kindergarten here for nineteen and seven years respectively. Their expertise is recognized by virtue of their training and experience. Mrs. Stone is currently a teacher of our kindergarten-first grade (K-1) transition program and is working with both kindergarten and first grade curriculum. She has taught both kindergarten and first grade in previous years. Mrs. Brewer is currently a first grade teacher and Mrs. Bader, currently a second grade teacher has also taught first grade for several years.

There are two other second grade teachers on the committee, Mrs. Hillestad and Mrs. Thompson (who has also taught kindergarten for several years). Mrs. Prokop, a third grade teacher, formerly taught Title I kindergartners and Mrs. Heal teaches fifth grade. Mrs. Peterson and Ms. Rudmanis both teach kindergarten sections of Title I and Miss Dunne, a music teacher, represents a specialist's viewpoint.

Mrs. Fryman, currently the district reading specialist, teaches remedial reading to first, second and third graders and has taught in both first and third grade self-contained classrooms. Ms. Clark-Stedman, the guidance counselor at the Elementary School, has a background in early childhood education with experience at the preschool and kindergarten level. She has served on the staff of the University of Wisconsin as a supervisor of student teachers in preschool and kindergarten education.

Finally, the administrators on the committee are Joe Slaney, Curriculum Coordinator, and Glen E. Schulz, Elementary Principal.

Of the sixteen committee members, thirteen are parents. Ten of these parents have older children who have gone through a formal kindergarten experience and five are parents who presently have preschoolers who will be going through a kindergarten experience at some point in the future.

This study committee, then, represents a cross section of parental and professional viewpoints with a considerable amount of training and expertise in early childhood education enriched by the training and experience of others of higher grade levels and that of those who cross many grade levels.

PART III: THE DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The question of whether this district should change from its present schedule of half day-every day kindergarten classes to a schedule of full day-alternate days is indeed complex. It goes far beyond the issue of saving the cost of the noon bus runs and rescheduling bus routes into the issues of child development, early childhood learning theory, social, emotional and physical needs of the five-year-old, staffing patterns, daily program designs, curriculum design, availability of appropriate space and equipment, teacher attitudes, student attitudes and self-concept, parent acceptance and support and the need for greater home-school communication with the parent playing a larger role in the education of the child. These issues were all examined as parts of the greater question.

The study itself was comprised of five basic elements. Interviews, visits to other schools, a review of the professional literature, a review of studies conducted by other Wisconsin school districts and parent input were combined to provide the vehicle for examining the issues. A sixth element, originally planned was to be a survey of Wisconsin schools regarding this question, but it was learned early in the study that several districts had performed such surveys very recently and that their information was available to us. Thus it was decided not to replicate this process.

The interviews consisted of discussions with Department of Public Instruction personnel, early childhood specialists from the University of Wisconsin, teachers and administrators. Some were conducted in person while others were via telephone. Interviews were conducted with personnel in districts where full-day alternate days scheduling was studied and turned down, where it was implemented successfully, where it was tried and then discontinued and where it is operating but not successfully. In all, eighteen interviews were conducted.

Members of the study committee visited four schools where some form of full day-alternate days scheduling is employed. In one school they have always had this schedule. Due to the topography of the district it would be impossible to run noon bus runs thus the question which they had to answer was not whether to have full day-alternate days or no kindergarten at all. Another district visited has been operating on a full day-alternate days schedule for 3½ years. Two other districts are in their first years of implementing a full day-alternate days schedule. In one of these districts it is regarded by part of the staff as mildly successful and by part of the staff as unsuccessful. In the other district it is viewed by the staff as totally inappropriate. The teachers in these programs ranged from beginners to experienced teachers with more than fifteen years of experience. The experienced teachers have had experience with both full day and half-day schedules.

The review of the professional literature began with an ERIC search performed by the Wisconsin Dissemination Project which produced seven research studies which have been conducted on this question. These studies are listed in the bibliography and their findings and limitations will be discussed in Part IV. The review also produced numerous articles written on the subject by early childhood specialists. These, too, are listed in the bibliography.

The review of studies conducted by other Wisconsin school districts was greatly facilitated by the School District of Reedsburg which had completed a survey of Wisconsin school districts as recently as the summer of 1980. They compiled all of the information which they had gathered into one notebook and loaned it to us. This assembled information includes answers to their surveys, tabulated surveys done by other districts, opinions of school administrators, copies of research studies and professional articles, etc. In addition the School District of the Tomorrow River in Amherst sent us a copy of the study they had done.

Parent input was solicited by the Board of Education when it sponsored a public meeting on Wed., January 28, 1981. An invitation to this meeting was mailed to every home in the school district. A large group of parents attended and shared their concerns and indicated their preferences.

The information gleaned from these interviews, visits, reviews of the literature, reviews of studies conducted in other districts and the input from parents will be discussed in detail in Part IV.

PART IV: THE REPORT

Introduction

The question of a half day-every day or full day-alternate days kindergarten scheduling must first be looked at in terms of kindergarten itself. The kindergarten concept is not new to the educational scene. Tracing its history leads one back to the middle 1700's and the educational theories of Pestalozzi. In the early 1800's, Froebel, a German educator and follower of Pestalozzi's theories, started the first kindergarten. In 1855 the first kindergarten was opened in the United States. Mrs. Carl Schurz, a student of Froebel in Germany, came to Watertown, Wisconsin and started a private kindergarten patterned after the one in which she had studied. During the ensuing years many other private kindergartens were opened around the country and in 1872 St. Louis, Mo. became the first public school system to include a kindergarten. Other districts soon followed suit. In 1873 the first public school kindergarten in Wisconsin was opened by the Manitowoc public schools and so the movement has spread.

Starting in the early '60's early childhood educators began to reexamine theories, philosophies and ultimately curriculum in the kindergarten. Some of the theories of Froebel which had been influenced by Pestalozzi began to be questioned and educators began to take a more academic view of the kindergarten. Research increased rapidly and the advent of children's programming on television, Head Start, the Day Care Centers, etc., brought about a surge of interest in more formal training in the academic areas, particularly of reading, writing and mathematics readiness. The Evansville-Vanderburgh study says:

> *The amount of children enrolled in day care centers and kindergarten has tripled since the 1960's. Today it seems that the child's beginning years of life are being pushed into government, technology and economics.* [12]

The administrative rule governing kindergartens in Wisconsin adopted in 1974 spells out the broad area that the kindergarten is expected to cover.

> *...Physical facilities, equipment and materials shall be provided for a program which includes opportunities for learning basic concepts and skills in language arts, fine arts, social studies, science, mathematics and physical education.* [8]

The kindergarten curriculum has come a long way from the Froebelian theories of primarily social and linguistic development although they are still considered a major concern.

From its inception the kindergarten was perceived as a half day program by its proponents. Sue Ann Bates, tracing the history of the kindergarten, quotes the Twenty-First Annual Report of 1875 to the Board of Directors of the St. Louis Public Schools as saying that "the daily session of a kindergarten ought not to exceed three or three and a half hours." In 1879, Superintendent William T. Harris was proposing a plan for financing the kindergarten and again referred to the time of the sessions:

> *The session should not last over three hours for the children of this age. Hence each room permits two sessions to be held in it per day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, thus accomodating double the number of pupils.* [2]

Ever since Wisconsin has provided financial aids to school districts, kindergarten has received funding as a half-day program.

According to Bates[2] the full day-alternate days scheduling appears to be unique to Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin. At the present time approximately 54 out of 433 school districts in Wisconsin are operating some form of full day-alternate days schedule and four districts are operating a full day-every day schedule. A list of these districts appears in the appendix. In addition, these districts have been located on a map of Wisconsin School Districts to facilitate selection of schools for interviews and visits and in an effort to generalize data concerning their schedules. This map is located in the principal's office at Lodi Elementary School. There are approximately ten different patterns for scheduling full day-alternate days. A list of these variations also appears in the appendix.

With some concern for redundancy it must again be pointed out that this is a complex issue. The complexities of the issues involved in the greater question were discussed in the description of the study design. Further complexities were encountered in carrying out the study itself. The interviews revealed school districts where the full day-alternate days schedule was successful and districts where it was not successful. Teachers who felt this kind of schedule was better were interviewed as well as those who felt it was inferior. The visits likewise provided views of districts where it was highly accepted and those where it was very much disliked. The review of the professional literature demonstrated research studies which showed full day-alternate days schedules to be superior and studies which demonstrated that half day-every day schedules produced better results. And the review of studies conducted by other Wisconsin districts revealed similar contrasting viewpoints. Only the early childhood specialists seem to be consistent in their opinions. Both in interviews and in professional articles they consistently list the full day-alternate days schedule as the least desireable schedule for kindergarten classes.

The inconsistency of the majority of the data collected led the committee to attempt to analyze the data in an effort to tabulate or classify the information in a form which would be useable in arriving at a recommendation regarding this question. A summary of the information follows.

The Interviews

Dr. Sue Ann Bates, early childhood specialist with the Department of Public Instruction, in an interview with the Superintendent and Principal has indicated that the official posture of the Department of Public Instruction on this question is that districts must provide a kindergarten experience for all children five years of age which is equivalent to 180 half days in accordance with Wisconsin statutes. The DPI further states that this requirement may be met by full day-alternate days scheduling, half day-every day scheduling or full day-every day scheduling. This is the full extent of the DPI's official position at this time.

Dr. Bates has some strong feelings and opinions on this question, but has been asked not to share them publicly at this time as they might be misconstrued as representing the viewpoint of the DPI in light of her position there. Her opinions have been made public, however, in the form of published and unpublished articles which had been circulated prior to this action by the Department. These articles are referenced in the bibliography.

The remaining seventeen interviews produced four (4) positive responses, two, (2) semi-positive responses, one (1) uncertain response and ten (10) negative responses to the question of preference for a full day-alternate days schedule.

These interviews included responses from eleven administrators, two kindergarten teachers and four early childhood specialists.

The four positive responses came from administrators in districts where full day-alternate days scheduling is presently used. In each case the primary advantage was seen to be cost savings and less time on the bus for the children. (In one district the longest ride was reduced from 2 hrs. to 45 min.) The greatest disadvantage seemed to be the length of the day. Some children became too tired and for some the afternoon was less productive than the morning. The two semi-positive responses came from administrators in districts that have just started the full day-alternate days schedule. They believe that it was the right choice and cited the same advantages as those mentioned by the positive respondents. At this point they are still evaluating the program. The one uncertain response was from an administrator in a district that is currently studying the question.

The ten negative responses came from four administrators, two teachers and four early childhood specialists. The administrators were all in districts that have recently studied the issue and decided to stay with half day-every day scheduling. In each case parent opposition was cited as the primary reason. Two of the districts will continue to study the issue and in two of the districts the issue is thought to be dead. Three of the administrators have not formulated personal positions on the issue and one is opposed.

The two teachers who were interviewed have both taught in full day-alternate days programs and half day-every day programs. Both were emphatic in their support of the half day-every day programs. The major disadvantages listed for full day-alternate days schedule were: full day is too long-the children are physically exhausted in p.m., thus little is accomplished; children can't absorb two days curriculum in one day-attention span is too short; schedule is confusing to children and parents; children are too immature-particularly 1st semester; there are too many interruptions in the instructional time necessitated by the children being there all day. One teacher who had taught in a full day-alternate days program for 4 years felt that this kind of schedule had several advantages for the teacher but none for the children.

The four early childhood specialists from the University of Wisconsin were consistent in their view that the half day-every day schedule was better for children. Their concerns included a difficulty in meeting all of the social and emotional needs of a five year old in a regimented all day setting. They pointed out that the morning is usually quality instructional time, but by afternoon the children can no longer continue in this mode and the kindergarten virtually becomes a day care center. One Professor questioned the use of public school funds to provide day care. Another Professor pointed out that the lack of a structured routine actually increases the fatigue level, thus compounding this problem. Continuity for the children is one of the biggest problems and use of prime instructional time for excessive review necessitated by the days off is a real concern. A need for larger physical spaces to accomodate more kinds of activities is another concern. There was also concern expressed for meeting the nutritional needs of the five year old in an all day school setting; and finally for providing a quality rest period in a school setting.

In summary, the interviews provided six positive and ten negative responses to the question of changing to a full day-alternate days schedule for kindergarten. The advantages listed were primarily cost savings. The disadvantages listed were primarily concerns for child welfare, ability to adjust and need for major program changes.

The Visits

Teams of committee members visited four school districts that currently use a full day-alternate days schedule. The first district visited is in the first year of implementation. They have three kindergarten teachers, two of whom are experienced with several years of half day-every day experience and one of whom is a beginning teacher. When it was decided to change to the full day-alternate days scheduling, one of the experienced teachers was very much opposed to the concept and one was very excited about the change. The beginning teacher was enthused about this kind of concept. The district decided on the change to effect a cost savings.

The team visited the school at the beginning of the second semester. By this time the teacher who had been opposed to the change was even more strongly opposed. The teacher who had been excited about the change still felt that the new schedule was superior to the old schedule, but that it should not be started until the second semester; and the beginning teacher who had been enthused at first was losing her enthusiasm for this schedule. The administrator's attitude was that he did not feel that this was the best schedule from the children's standpoint, but since it was an economic necessity every effort should be made to ensure the best possible program under the circumstances. He had chosen to hold his own child back a year rather than chancing his being in a full day program too soon.

The advantages to full day programming as seen in this district include a cost savings; more time for bigger art projects and special activities like cooking or baking; longer day provides more opportunities for reinforcing social attitudes; more physical education time; an hour more contact time.

The disadvantages identified were that students do not master routines; there seems to be more absenteeism, if a child is sick in the morning he misses the whole day which is actually the equivalent of two days; the children are too tired-most want to go home at noon; the students simply do not put out in the afternoon what they do in the morning-you cannot put two days work into one, therefore, you accomplish less over a year's time; the system seems to make the children grow up too fast; vacations or days off can mean that a child might be out of school for a whole week (a Tuesday-Thursday child would miss Thurs. at Teacher's Convention so it would be Tuesday to Tuesday for him. If he should be sick on the next Tuesday, it would be the following Thursday before he would be back in school). This kind of interruption in schooling is difficult for a five year old to make up; more help is needed in the form of aides and specialists - then teacher isn't working directly with student; need more materials and equipment to provide for all day involvement of the students; more discipline problems - particularly toward end of the day; the biggest, most critical disadvantage was the lack of continuity - the students simply were not mastering the concepts and the teachers were spending a great deal of time rehashing previous lessons over and over. This lack of continuity was the concern that caused the beginning teacher to change her opinion concerning this schedule.

Although this district feels that its full day-alternate days schedule is successful, the committee observed far more disadvantages than advantages during its visit.

The second district visited has had a full day-alternate days schedule since they first started kindergarten more than ten years ago. The administrator indicated that because of the topography of the district, it would be impossible to establish a mid-day bus run. When kindergarten was started it was realized that this would be the schedule and it was accepted.

The teacher in this district is a beginning teacher this year and thus has no

real basis of comparison, but both the teacher and the administrator felt the program was successful. The teacher felt that the day was too long for some and that the afternoon was less productive - more time was wasted trying to keep children on task and disciplining. She also commented on some problems with the lunch program in that the tables are too high for some and the time is too short for some. Some children actually have to bring some of their lunch back to the room to finish eating. In spite of these problems she felt that the schedule was working well.

The third district visited changed to a full day-alternate days schedule 3½ years ago. The teacher in this district is also a beginning teacher this year. The administrator in this district is extremely positive about this change in scheduling. He indicated that cost savings was the primary concern but that he saw many other benefits as well, one of them being that the district now has a breakfast program as a result of this change. The teacher noted flexibility as a big advantage and she feels that the full day better prepares a child for 1st grade. She also sees positive aspects to the lunch program from a standpoint of teaching good nutrition habits. Another advantage is more time to work on social development. The only real disadvantage which she noted is that the day is too long for both teacher and children and that aide help is absolutely necessary as is considerably more communication between home and school. Our team noted a great deal of frustration on the part of the kids and more discipline problems as the day went on.

The fourth and final visit was to a district that is in its first year of implementation of a full day-alternate days schedule. The two teachers are both experienced kindergarten teachers. Both the teachers and the administrator with whom the team met feel that this change was a great mistake. The parents in the district are split on the issue, but the staff feels that those parents who like it favor it for the wrong reasons, namely convenience to them rather than what is good for their child. The staff could list only two advantages as they saw it, cost savings and the full day permitted some more involved project work.

The list of disadvantages is quite long. The administrator cited concern for the length of the day. He feels that his teachers are baby sitting in the afternoon. He feels that because of this you cannot do in 90 full days what you would normally have done in 180 half days. You cannot have a full day academic curriculum so the afternoon ends up to be a day care setting. He also believes the long day is too hard on kids physically and they become over tired. He cites the example of the parent who called him to say that her son had come home from school so tired that he fell asleep almost immediately, slept through supper and the whole night and awoke at 10 o'clock the following morning. The administrator also feels that some of the kids have a lowered resistance because of fatigue and thus there is more illness. Compounding this is that some parents send their child even when they're not feeling well because they don't want them to miss too much. Some parents are beginning to resist also and are picking their children up at noon or bringing them in late in the morning which is compounding the problems. Finally, the administrator sees less student enthusiasm and more immature behavior such as crankiness, tears, pant wetting, etc.

The teachers concurred with the list of disadvantages given by the administrator and added a few more of their own. They feel that the lack of a clearly established daily routine for meals, activities, rest, bedtime, etc. throws off the whole body rhythm and that this accounts for some of the problems which they are facing. One of these problems is that the children can't seem to gain an orientation to the time of day, etc. They also list the need for a larger room for gross motor skill

development and problems with the lunch program as serious drawbacks. They both feel that their classes are behind previous year's classes in reading readiness development and blame lack of continuity and quality of instructional time for this. They also feel that student attitude is poor. One of the teachers attempted to survey attitudes and discussed full day-alternate days and half day-every day scheduling with her class and then (individually on an attitude survey) asked which they'd prefer. Four preferred full day, twenty two indicated that they'd like to come everyday for a half day.

This final visit proved to be negative in every respect. However, even in the district where the schedule is perceived as being successful there seem to be more disadvantages than advantages to the full day schedule.

A Review of the Professional Literature

Although research in education has come to be as common as in other areas there has been very little research done in the question of a half day-every day kindergarten vs full day-alternate days. There has been a great deal of research done on the importance of kindergarten itself and there have been some studies on the question of the benefit of full day-every day scheduling but our committee was able to find only seven studies that addressed the question which was being studied here.

It should also be pointed out that the design of the research can have a direct bearing on the outcome of the study. Without completing a dissertation on research itself, suffice it to say that each of the seven studies has many limitations, but since they are all that we have we will review them here.

The Minnesota Department of Education has compiled a summary of each of these studies and has included a discussion of research design, the problems in the research designs of these seven studies and a set of questions that districts should ask when examining the studies in the light of their own studies.[5]

Study #1 was done by the Minnesota Department of Education. This study found a significant difference in certain subtests which indicated that children in half day-every day schedules did better. In some subtests they found no statistically significant difference.

Study #2 was done by Gornowich, Volker and Landry and the subtests showed either no significant difference or any advantages for students in the full day-alternate days schedule. However, a major limitation to this study is that the data was collected over five succeeding years with the first three years being in half day-every day and the last two years being in full day-alternate days. Thus there were many uncontrolled variables.

Study #3 was done by Mouw in Rhinelander, Wisconsin. Although Mouw did not do a statistical analysis, it can be observed from the raw score means which she reported that there was not a significant difference between these two programs that would show up on the Cognitive Abilities Test.

Study #4 was done by Cleminshaw who found that children in full day-alternate days programs did significantly better on all but one subtest and in that there was no statistical difference.

Study #5 was done by Wenger over a two year period. Wenger found that children in a half day-every day program did significantly better on every subtest at the end of kindergarten. He then examined their scores on tests in first grade the following

year and found again that children who had been in a half day-every day kindergarten did significantly better. (This study is considered to be the most accurate by the researchers who have reviewed these studies. It also employed the most controlled variables and guaranteed testing situations that would be similar to those found in most schools).

Study #6 was done by Smith and Pigge also over a two year period. Their findings show no significant difference on most measures but a significant advantage to half day-every day schedules on seven out of 21 comparisons on the Metropolitan Readiness Test. In the follow-up year, no signigicant difference was found except on two subtests which favored the half day-every day schedule.

Study #7 was done by C. L. Smith who found that on two different measures there were five subtests which showed a significant advantage for children in full day-alternate days schedules and no significant difference on other subtests.

Confusing? Yes indeed! There are seven different studies, many of them using the same instruments and yet coming up with opposite conclusions. And these studies only measure academic gains. We are also concerned with the many other effects on children which were delineated in Section III.

Yet these research studies do show us something. They demonstrate clearly that the advantages and/or disadvantages of half day-every day scheduling and/or full day-alternate days scheduling cannot at this point in time be found in research. Cleminshaw writing in the Journal of Educational Research says:

> *The scarcity of research on all day kindergartens makes it clear that the current movement toward the all day program has not been prompted by emperical research, but rather, in many instances, by financial problems.*[3]

And the Minnesota Department of Education says:

> *The best information we have to affect decision making is this small cluster of research studies. The reader has seen that this is not without many problems and limitations. As districts make clearer determinations of what kindergarten programs ought to accomplish for education and development of the young child, and as test measures begin to take into consideration broader areas of knowledge than academic skills in reading and mathematics, it will be possible to learn more about scheduling change and its effect on children.*[5]

In the meantime we must look beyond the field of research for answers to our questions.

In addition to the seven research studies reported above, several articles, both published and unpublished, have been written on this subject by early childhood specialists. Sue Ann Bates, after analyzing the same seven research studies listed above, goes on to list four reasons why she feels that the half day-every day kindergarten provides the best learning opportunity for the young child. Dr. Bates lists the child's perception of school, pacing, interference in learning and time (quality of instructional time) as these reasons. These are discussed in detail in her unpublished paper Half-Day Daily Kindergarten vs. Full-Day, Alternating Day Kindergarten. She goes on to discuss why districts have changed to alternate day schedules:

The tradition of kindergarten programming being a half-day, daily program for the child is based on child growth and development, learning theory and 105 years of successful programming. Why have some Wisconsin school districts changed to a full-day alternating day program? It is believed that this change has been made because of monetary constraints on school budgets. A fiscal consideration, not an educational consideration has precipitated the decision by the school board, which indeed, has the power under s. 120.13(8) to "establish rules scheduling the hours of each school day which the schools of the district shall be in session."

The decision has not been based upon a needs assessment of students, but a cost effective assessment which decided transportation costs would be cut if a noon kindergarten bus was not run. School transportation costs should not affect or dictate the instructional program of the school. The rationale for changing the kindergarten program from a half-day daily to a full day on alternate days should be closely examined and analyzed. The five year old child and the kindergarten program should not be made the "fall guy" of school transportation costs and budget restraints.[2]

Dr. Harlan Hanson of the University of Minnesota in support of full day-alternate days scheduling says:

In summary, its important to be honest about full day-alternate day kindergarten programs and admit it for what it is - a financial necessity! If it is that great an educational plan we probably would have done it a long time ago.[6]

His support stems not from approval of the concept but from a desire to make the best of a less than ideal situation.

Barbara Hatcher in an article which appeared in Phi Delta Kappan discussed the lack of research on the subject. She said:

Other objectives in programs for young children remain to be assessed: a child's ability to observe, discover, generalize, experiment, or solve problems; the ability to express thoughts and feelings in music, art and movement; self-motivation, independence, creativity, and self-discipline. Further investigation in these areas and on the variables relating to children's backgrounds, program and teachers is still needed to resolve the half-day/full day kindergarten controversy.[7]

This seems to summarize the state of the art at the present time. More research is needed before a research based decision is made.

A Review of Studies Conducted by Other Wisconsin School Districts

Many school districts in Wisconsin are studying or have recently studied the question of half day-every day or full day-alternate days scheduling for kindergarten. One such study was done by the School District of Reedsburg in the summer of 1980. Reedsburg sent letters to the districts which have or have had a form of full day scheduling. In their letter they requested opinions as to the success of such scheduling from administrators, teachers and parents. They cited twenty-eight responses (twenty-four are included in their study) several of which were summaries of similar studies done in other districts, so the information gathered had an even wider base. Information from those districts reported in the following comments will be referred to as coming from the Reedsburg study.[10]

Like the research, the Reedsburg study resulted in conflicting opinions. The opinions ranged from "Try it, you'll like it!" to "It was a disaster!" Of the twenty-four written responses fifteen favored their full day-alternate days schedule and seven opposed such a plan. One district was still studying the issue and one district has a plan that has students in attendance four full days per week. Of the seven negative responses six districts had tried a full day-alternate day schedule and dropped it and one district had studied the concept and decided against the change.

Of the fifteen districts which favored the concept, five cited cost savings and less time on the bus as the advantages. Three districts cited educational advantages for kids along with financial advantages and seven districts did not indicate advantages or disadvantages. Of the seven districts which opposed the change, two cited specific disadvantages for children and six indicated opposition by parents and staff. The seventh district did not state the reason for its opposition.

Typical of the inconsistencies found in this study are the following quotations written by two administrators in response to the Reedsburg survey. The first is from a Principal in a school that has had full day-alternate day scheduling since the inception of kindergarten twelve years ago.

> *Educationally, our kindergarten students have always tested above average nationally. In March of this year, sixty kindergarten students were given the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills. The composite results of six different skills showed our students at the 6.0 average national stanine and the 76% national rank. Our average grade equivalent was four months above average.* [10]

The second quote is from a district administrator from a district which tried and then abandoned full day-alternate days scheduling.

> *I made a special point to sit in on both the half-day and the full-day classes. I was a promoter of the full-day class, but after spending time in the classes, was soon convinced that from an educational point of view, the half-day was much better. What I saw was that a full-day was just too long for most kids. Some could handle it, but most couldn't. My advice would be to stick with the half-day program. Find some place else to save money.* [10]

The above information reflects primarily opinion collected in the Reedsburg study. One district submitted a survey which it had done after a six week pilot project in full day-alternate days scheduling. The pilot project ran the last six weeks of a school year. Twenty parents indicated that they "strongly believe that the every day half-day kindergarten program should not be changed". Eleven parents indicated that they "could accept the alternate-day full-day concept for children". On the same survey, twenty four parents indicated that their children preferred half-day every day and eleven indicated that their children preferred full-day alternate day kindergarten. Three indicated that it could be either way.

As confusing and inconsistent as the material in the Reedsburg study seems to be, there is one school district that has completed a study of its own which approaches the professional level of the research studies reported earlier, but without the accompanying inconsistencies. The School District of the Tomorrow River located in Amherst, Wisconsin has completed a study funded by an ESEA-Title IV-C grant. This study will be referred to as the Amherst Study. The Amherst Study was completed in November of 1980.

The three recognized schedules for kindergarten, full-day daily, half-day daily and full day-alternate day, were studied. Questionaires were sent to many schools across the nation, visits were made to a rural school district in Central Wisconsin, a large metropolitan district in Ohio and three small rural school districts in Minnesota. Parents, teachers and principals were sampled with the questionnaires.

Since our committee is looking only at half-day daily and full-day-alternate day only the results for these two schedules will be reported. Interested readers can find all of the results in the Amherst Study.

The return on the parent survey was 77.89%. Of the parents responding 73.2% favored half-day daily kindergarten and 18.7% favored the full day-alternate day schedule. Selected parent comments were included. One struck this writer as particularly poignant.

> *I often feel that we all sometimes forget that children are children, myself included, and we push them too hard, too fast, too soon. I'm worried that a full-day kindergarten would do just that.*[4]

The return on the teacher survey was 40%. 73% of the teachers currently in a half-day daily program feel that this is the best schedule while only 30% of those in a full day-alternate day schedule feel this is the best option. Advantages, disadvantages and trends were listed for all options. Two conclusions were drawn. Teachers find the alternate day program the least desireable and the advantages for half-day programs outweigh those for full day-alternate day programs and there are far more disadvantages cited for alternate day programs by the teachers.

72% of the principals returned their surveys. 83.3% of those with half-day programs indicated a preference for the half-day. 32% of the principals with alternate day programs listed this as their preference. The conclusion drawn was that half-day daily programs are viewed more positively by principals than alternate-day programs.

A detailed report on the visits listed above is included in the study as in the cases of the questionaires, the observations indicate a strong advantage of the half-day daily program over the full-day alternate day programs.

Seven conclusions were reached by this study. Only one deals with the full day-alternate day concept.

> 5. *The only significant advantage to a full-day alternate day program is a cost savings in transportation and this is at the expense of the educational and emotional needs of the kindergarten child. This program lacks in continuity, instructional time, and management efficiency. The majority of teachers currently working with this program would not choose it again if given the option.*[4]

The recommendation of this study to the Board of Education of the School District of the Tomorrow River is to continue with the present half-day daily program.

Out of the confusion of the many studies, surveys and assessments done by Wisconsin school districts on the question of the advantages of alternate day kindergarten programming the Amherst Study emerges as a singular point of reference. The study is objective, the questions are unbiased and the information can be tabulated. At this point in time this seems to be the most credible document available.

Parent Input

Parent input was received in several ways. The primary source of input was a district meeting sponsored by the Board of Education on January 28, 1981. An invitation to this meeting was mailed to every residence in the district. The invitation explained the present half-day every day schedule, delineated several alternative schedules, discussed the reason for the study, described how the study was to be done and invited everyone to attend and be heard. The purpose of the meeting was not to inform, but rather for the Board and the committee to become informed of parent concerns, feelings and attitudes about the question of full day-alternate days or half day-every day kindergarten schedules.

Parents in attendance at the meeting raised questions about the necessity of curriculum changes, the lunch program, physical affects on children, emotional affects on children, comparative costs, staffing needs, sources of studies, continuity and other related issues. Concerns were voiced about children becoming over tired and what effect this might have, about lack of established routines, about pushing children too fast, about the lack of evidence supporting an alternate day program and a variety of concerns about cost factors. A show of hands indicated that 52 people present opposed a change to an alternate day schedule. No one favored such a change, but several indicated they had not yet decided. A complete list of questions and concerns which were raised at the meeting may be found in the Appendix.

As the committee conducted interviews. visited schools and reviewed the literature, the questions and concerns raised at the meeting were kept in mind and most of them are dealt with in the various lists of advantages and disadvantages.

Additional input has been received by phone calls from parents and especially by the efforts of two parents who have done some research on their own. One of the parents interviewed several professors at the University of Wisconsin and the information gleaned is reported in the section on interviews. This parent also gave the committee leads on further interviews with knowledgable people.

The second parent researched most of the studies which the committee had and filed the following report.

> *I began reading the research on Full Day-Alternate Day vs. Half Day Daily kindergarten with as much an open mind as I could. I also called Mr. Peterson, Mount Horeb's Superintendent, since that district faced the same proposal last month and decided against Full Day-Alternate Day scheduling. I wanted to have one program clearly condemned and another clearly held up as the answer. As you know, that clear delineation is not there. Some letters sent in response to Reedsburg's inquiry said, "Try it - we like and it's working well!" Others said, "We tried - it was a disaster. Don't consider it!" What makes the difference? Obviously, without visiting each of the systems involved in the response, I can only guess at several possibilities. But the thing that was reiterated time and again is the fact that the studies focus on one thing: if the teachers and the parents aren't behind it, it won't work. With the resistance seen at the January 28 meeting, I don't feel we should subject our kindergarteners of next year to a guinea pig operation.*
>
> *There are several factors pulling me in favor of maintaining half day daily kindergarten:*

1) Five year old children are definitely more tired in the afternoon than in the morning, especially after a rigorous (structured) morning schedule. In order to put 2 half-days together into 1 day, a teacher will have to teach 2 vigorous plans in 1 day. The argument that full day-alternate day allows the teacher more teaching time with his/her students is a fallacy in that at present, over a 2 week time span in Lodi, the students meet for 2½ hours x 10 days, or 25 hours. Under the proposed plan the students would meet 6½ hours x 5 days, or 32½ hours. BUT, the full day schedule would definitely necessitate at least ½ hour to 45 minutes of rest a day, plus lunchtime (½ hour), which brings the time down to 26 hours at maximum; even less effective time as the child's attention span becomes taxed as the day wears on.

2) The only schedules that make any sense are MWF-TTh, or MW½F-TTh½F. The MWF-TTh schedule means that a student sick on Thursday has no school contact for 5 days; a student sick or away with his/her family on a Friday misses contact with school for 6 days! The same time lapse (6 days) occurs with a Monday illness. Because of Thanksgiving, Teachers' Convention, and sometimes other holiday arrangements that make Thursday and Friday fall off the scholastic calendar, the kindergarten student would pay the price. With MW½F-TTh½F transportation cost savings ($21,500) would be cut by one fifth, reducing the saving to $17,200.

3) A very important factor in preparing the kindergartener for later schooling is continuity. Attending school daily ensures that continuity.

In 2 studies supporting half day daily kindergarten education, Sue Bates PhD in her 1979 paper cites studies by Wenger and by Pigge and Smith, who administered the Walker Readiness Test and the Metropolitan Reading Readiness Test, respectively, to 2 groups of kindergarteners: one group of half-day daily, and one group of full day-alternate day. Wenger found that the half day students clearly did better on his administered test than full day-alternate day students. Pigge and Smith confirmed that half day students possessed higher year-end achievement as measured by their test than students on a full day-alternate day basis. They found that the half day daily schedule was even more advantageous to boys than to girls. But since these test scores tell only part of the story, it isn't fair to use them as the sole measure of the effectiveness of either plan.

The problems Sue Bates notes in the full day-alternate day program are:

A) Child's perception of school can be very sporadic.
B) Much need for re-entry due to the too-long time interval between lessons.
C) Interference in learning, between the child's environment and the school experience.
D) Bombardment with massive amounts of information rather than spacing material. Young child has too short an attention span for all day concentrated learning.

Since the quality of education is the deciding factor, the burden of proof lies with the advocate of change. The review of studies at the Elementary School, and the analysis of the circumstances in the present Lodi kindergarten has resulted in not only a failure to substantiate the

superiority of the all day-alternate day program, but has reaffirmed many of the advantages of the traditional half day daily approach. The 5 year old child and the kindergarten program should not be made the "fall guy" of school transportation costs and budget restraints.

Sincerely,

Maggie Giese

The committee wishes to acknowledge and thank all of the parents for their input. It has helped us in formulating a recommendation to the Board of Education.

PART V: CONCLUSION

Summary

A study of the issues involved in the question of half day-every day or full day-alternate days kindergarten scheduling was requested by the Board of Education. A committee of elementary faculty and administration undertook the study which included interviews, visits to schools operating alternate day programs, a review of the professional literature, a review of studies conducted by other Wisconsin school districts, and parent input.

At first glance only confusion and inconsistencies seemed evident. Then a pattern began to emerge. As the committee studied the information which they gathered they determined to examine it in the light of ten basic categories. The categories were curriculum, personnel, scheduling, effects on children, home-school communications, additional teaching materials, relationship to learning theory, parents perceptions, transportation and others. As they listed advantages and disadvantages in each category it became apparent that the disadvantages to alternate day scheduling far outweighed the advantages, not only in number but in impact on children. These advantages and disadvantages are listed in the accompanying table.

As the research was evaluated it soon became apparent that there is absolutely no hard data available that clearly demonstrates a superiority for one schedule over the other. One major problem with the research is that it examines only academic growth and there are many other questions to be answered in terms of effects on children before schools make wholesale changes to this kind of schedule. Another major problem lies in the mechanics of the research studies. They were not well constructed studies and only one had more than two or three controlled variables. In many cases the populations surveyed were not carefully selected and control groups were often not matched to the experimental groups. In no case was the Hawthorne Effect taken into consideration and no longitudinal studies have been done. Only one study was regarded as accurate by all of those who reviewed it. Wenger's study identified eighteen controlled variables, selected the populations carefully and included a follow-up with the same population one year later. This study showed a significant difference in favor of half day-every day schedules in both years!

A review of studies conducted by other Wisconsin school districts likewise revealed a dearth of conclusive evidence. Opinions of districts who have tried alternate day scheduling varied from excellent to disastrous. Similar school districts seem to have had opposite results. Again lack of evidence of the effects on children seems to create a large void in the necessary information. Only the Amherst Study stands out with any degree of consistency, and it clearly recommends staying with the half day-every day schedule.

Parent input has unmistakably indicated a clear preference for remaining with half day scheduling. An examination of the questions and concerns raised reveals a true concern for the welfare of the children. Those who are cautiously willing to take a closer look at alternate day scheduling want more information; information which is not yet available through research.

Finally, we must reexamine the reason why so many districts have gone to or are studying alternate day scheduling. The answer, quite simply, is money. But even this issue is not as simple and clear cut as it appears. While the cost of the mid-day bus runs could be saved other expenditures would be incurred. Many advocates of full day scheduling recommend that it not be started in the beginning of the year. If it's started at the semester time only half the cost is saved.

The best alternate day schedule seems to be 2½ days per week. Thus on one day the mid-day bus runs would still be in operation so only 4/5 of the remaining half would be saved. Nearly all advocates concur that an aide is needed in any full day program so the salary of two aides would further reduce the amount saved. Most advocates feel that space and equipment for gross motor development becomes important in a full day program and all agree that more supplies and materials are needed. Thus even the cost effectiveness of such a change is questionable.

The Recommendation

Based on a summary of all of the information that is currently available to this district the study committee unanimously recommends that the present half day-every day kindergarten schedule be retained.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES
OF
FULL DAY - ALTERNATE DAYS SCHEDULE

Advantages	Disadvantages
CURRICULUM	
Opportunity to expand the curriculum	Not able to cover as much as in half day
Able to have more activities & specials	Review of skills and content repetitious and extensive
More time to diagnose and record children's needs	Need to repeat a great deal
More time for readiness skills	Must have excellent organizational plan
Able to extend time with individual students	Language skills need daily reinforcement
More instruction time	Some schools turn it into day care and don't give the kids equivalent amount of readiness, read aloud time, concept development, etc. - cheated educationally. They need the instruction time.
More time for stories, cooking, involved art projects	Children forget concepts
Able to incorporate more motor activities	Lack of researched curriculum to handle this program
More fun time	No curriculum for working with parents
	Afternoon outdoors - not much academic
	Many five-year-olds just can't cope
	Alternate days break continuity
	Objectives & strategies are built on reinforcement
	Listening and attending skills not as effective as half day
	Children who missed one day every other day, may be seen only one time per week by the teacher
	Interrupted program due to absence made difficult to pick up
	Too little accomplished in P.M.
	Can't absorb two days of curriculum in one day
	Need to reinforce twice a day after initial teaching
	Focus must change
	Discipline problems limit amount material covered

Advantages and Disadvantages of
Full Day - Alternate Days Schedule
(Continued)

Advantages	Disadvantages
PERSONNEL	
	Art, music, phy.ed. specialist needed
	Need enough people to meet needs of whole child-mothering, caring, meeting physical needs
	Need more hands the first few weeks
	Need help with lunch
	Need more than one aide because teacher gets drained at beginning
	Need help outside
	Use of volunteer parents early in the year makes adjustment to school more difficult for the volunteer's child
	Teachers may be angry if they're not involved in the planning
	Parents must be involved in instruction to maintain continuity
SCHEDULING	
More convenient for parents	A survey in one school district showed:
Easier to arrange sitter	53% parents opposed FDAD schedule
More opportunity for field trips	12% parents liked FDAD schedule
Children don't have to get up so early in the morning	Of those parents who had had their children in half day programs and a child in FDAD - 77% preferred half days
More opportunity for gross-motor activities	30% of parents experienced problems with FDAD
Get one more hour of contact with school per week	26% of parents experienced no problems with FDAD
Allows for flexible grouping	61% kids preferred half day
	No rest last quarter
	Attendance pattern
	Desireable to eat in OWN rooms
	Two snacks
	Proper time and facilities for rest - 30 minutes - one hour
	May be 3-4 days between classes - means lots of review
	Confusion over scheduling - especially at the beginning of year
	Problems with lunch period
	Include time for teacher prep and working with parents

Advantages and Disadvantages of
Full Day - Alternate Days Schedule
(Continued)

Advantages	Disadvantages
(Scheduling Continued)	
	Need routine of coming to school daily
	Time wasted getting ready for specials, etc.
	Vacations meant many days in a row missed for kids
	Difficulty in scheduling specials
	Too long of afternoon
	Need adequate time to eat lunch
EFFECTS ON CHILDREN	
ACADEMIC:	
	Children have difficulty remembering lesson on previous days
	Research report stated - HDD performed better on Metropolitan Test
	Strain on kids memory when they're absent
	Research report stated - Kids scored lower on ability to name numbers, (1-10), knowledge of alphabet sounds
	On all measures - they had lower scores and greater range of scores
	Kids behind in reading readiness
PHYSICAL:	
More opportunities for gross-motor activities	A survey in one school district showed:
More opportunity for outdoor activities	33% more sleep on "off days"
	26% slept before supper
	33% "Other" - tired cranky
	Too tired to benefit from P.M. instruction - students want to go home
	Some children not mature enough
	HDD better if parents send P.M. students well rested
	Need to meet student needs usually met by parent
	Children very restless by late morning
	Bus students more tired than town students

Advantages and Disadvantages of
Full Day-Alternate Days Schedule
(Continued)

Advantages	Disadvantages
(Effects on Children Continued)	
SOCIAL:	
More relaxed atmosphere More opportunity for social development More time to work on manners More time to find and work on problems	A survey in one school district showed: 55% adjusted easily. Kids wanted to go every day. Seeing school as a regular event. May have a greater impact than seeing it as an uncertainty. Difficult for generally immature, shy student Children who were assigned to Tuesday-Thursday class had trouble adjusting to school Discipline problems Attend too little to settle into routine Must meet needs usually met by parents Some sent back to preschool Kids have to grow up too fast Students irritable by end of day
HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION	
	Parents have to work more with kids at home - many notes between home and school Must be a close relationship "Parents must be parent educator" - Bates Involve parent in classroom
ADDITIONAL TEACHING MATERIALS	
	Need more large muscle equipment More space, more exploration centers and free play areas Need space for large motor activities Need materials for dramatic play Need more manipulatives Need more materials for language and math
LEARNING THEORY RELATION	
	Kids learn better in half day kindergarten according to Minnesota Test scores Difficult for kids to remember - learn by repetition which is effected by alternate days missed

Advantages and Disadvantages of
Full Day - Alternate Days Schedule
(Continued)

Advantages	Disadvantages
(Learning Theory Relation Continued)	
	Developing concepts and related thinking skill will be hampered by days off Need for consistent daily environment More individualization needed Need more experiential learning More small groups
PARENTS PERCEPTIONS	
More convenient for parents One parent liked because can take child places on day off Easier to arrange sitter Children don't have to get up so early	Parents surveyed in one school system were against FDAD Of 66% that had experienced half day and FDAD: 33% prefer one half 67% alternate day Question attentiveness, retention. Back up review too much Some are concerned with child care, free time instead of educational value for child Children very tired at beginning of year Don't know what to do with kids on day off from school Difficult to schedule dental appointment, etc. Bedtime fluctuates Parents opposed to FDAD pick up students at noon Bring students late because they are too tired
TRANSPORTATION	
Cuts down on transportation cost Cuts down on time student spends on bus No need for extra buses	Bus scheduling difficult Small children on bus both times with older children Bus very traumatic at first
ADDITIONAL	
Adjust to first grade better Better nutrition	Teacher indicates her acceptance because of financial situation and makes the best of it Time for school routine adjustment Parents must become parent educators - do they have time?

Advantages and Disadvantages of
Full Day - Alternate Days Schedule
(Continued)

Advantages	Disadvantages
(Additional Continued)	
	Must be aware of nutritional needs
	More pressure on the teacher
	Children not brought in if ill only in A.M.
	Recommend keeping children at home after first month if child is young and having trouble with school
	Send younger children to preschool or suggest stay home for a year
	Inattentive by late morning
	More absenteeism
	Do not master routine

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APPENDIX

FULL-DAY - EVERY DAY KINDERGARTENS

Drummond	Holmen
Greenwood	Stockbridge

FULL DAY - ALTERNATING DAY KINDERGARTENS

Argyle	De Soto	Plum City (sec. sem.)
Bayfield	Durand	Prairie Farm
Birchwood	Elcho	Prentice
Blackhawk	Elk Mound	Seneca
Black River Falls	Flambeau	Siren
Bloomington	Florence	Solon Springs
Boyceville	Gilman	South Shore
Bruce	Glidden, Jacobs	Stanley
Butternut	Hayward	Tony-Ingram-Glen Flora
Caddott	Highland	Unity
Campbellsport	Kiel	Wausaukee
Cashton	Lake Holcombe	Wauzeka
Cassville	Maple	Webster
Cedar Grove (will)	Mellen	West Grant
Clear Lake	Ondossagon, Barksdale	Westby
Cochran-Fountain City	Owen-Withee	Weyerhauser
Crandon	Pembine-Beecher-Dunbar	White Lake
Crivitz-Stephenson	Phillips (sec. Sem.)	Winter

Prepared by Sue Ann Bates, November 1980

PATTERNS FOR FULL DAY - ALTERNATE DAY PROGRAMS

1. Mon - Wed - Fri AM
   Tues - Thurs - Fri PM

2. Mon - Wed - Alternate Fridays
   Tues - Thurs - Alternate Fridays

3. Mon - Wed - Fri — 1st semester T - Th 2nd sem.
   Tues - Thurs — 1st semester Mon - Wed - Fri 2nd sem.

4. Literally every other day of the school calendar.

5. Full time for one semester - other semester off
   (I'm not sure if any district is doing this but it was discussed in one article).

6. Half day every day 1st sem. One of the above alternate day patterns for 2nd semester.

7. M - W
   T - Th — Friday off for kids - Prep time for staff

8. #s 3, 5 & 6 sometimes alternate quarter.

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING

January 28, 1981

Full Day - Alternate Day Kindergarten

Notes Taken by District Secretary

Hearing opened at 7:30 P.M. by School Board President Statz

Questions and comments were as follows:

1. Is there any savings having country children all go in the morning or all go in the afternoon? Would it save any in fuel or on route costs?

2. How does the curriculum change between half days and full days?

3. Parent has a five year old. Familiar with the Montesory School System. They are on the full day program and have "on the sight" care. When at the end of the day the parents pick child up, he is just exhausted at 4:00 p.m. She feels children not accustomed to a nursery school or any environment such as that will find the day too long going full day. They also need play time and the right facilities. If older, child may be able to handle it, but not at five years.

4. Has consideration been given to the lunch program? Will more staff be hired to give the children a hand with their trays?

5. Concerned with lunch serving time. Will child be eating at 11:30 a.m., because we eat at 6:00 p.m. and that would be too long of a time span between meals.

6. How much more additional time will you add for serving more children? Will they eat with first and second graders? She does not want her child with older students, feels it would scare the child at that age to be surrounded by older ones.

7. Woman has a fourth grader who claims half hour lunch is not enough time to eat his lunch. How will a kindergartener be able to do it?

8. Parent is not familiar with any school doing it full days. Feels kindergarten is set up to get the children to learn to sit and get ready for 12 years of schooling. How will sending them every other day teach them if they have to start with full days?

   Another parent had the same question. Also added: You're shoving them into school. She has a six year old who is just exhausted after 2½ hours. All day too long. She asked her child if he would like to go all day and he said no. They don't have a consistent pattern. Not learning consistently. Too much teaching repetition then.

9. Physical concerns have to be taken into consideration. Her five year old needs to eat several meals a day. Needs sleep and rest in the afternoon. Has a nephew who goes every other day and is just exhausted. They didn't have the proper facilities though.

10. Child now goes in morning and still needs nap in the afternoon. Do they still run separate buses for sports activities?

11. Find out how much is spent on sports activities for busing to games, etc. If cut back on kindergarten, maybe you should be checking on sports costs.

12. Has anyone looked into the buying of a van and then distributing that cost over the years. Could the district buy a van?

13. Have studies have been done on the discipline problems with all day. She has a one year old at a sitter's all day. After the day those other children there have no tolerance left with playing with each other. Feels discipline would be hard by afternoon to control.

14. Tiredness by the end of the day will effect the child's self-concept level. When she is tired, she just wants to be left alone to rest and not listen to anyone.

15. Not familiar with any school who has changed. Out of 400 schools in Wisconsin using this system, what number have been using these alternatives for a long time? Do you know of any long term studies done that had traditional schedule changed?

16. Her brother's children went to all day kindergarten and one child is slower and gets frustrated easily. She feels the children are pushed too fast.

17. Out of the studies who tried these, are there any that tried a different program and stopped? Why?

18. I went to half day every day kindergarten. How many children currently in kindergarten? What is the projection for 1981-82 and 1982-83? Will there be any location changes of schools? Are you considering a change of possibly opening other schools? (Like in Harmony Grove)

19. In the study, will more weight be given to schools that are our size? The children at day care will be more grown up than others.

20. What are the school sizes in the study?

21. Would a study find that in a school district where they went to a change, will the children be repeating grades because of lack of teaching skills or lack of learning? (lack of gain is main concern)
It will cost the school more if more children are repeating grades.

22. It will be a stigment on the child if he has to repeat.

23. Works with the elderly. Has found that continuity is very important. If too large a time is between days school missed due to holidays or illness, continuity for child is difficult.

24. Studies done, are they done by School Districts or independent third parties?

25. Tax levy limits- Tax limit on things school has no control over. Why can't we set a reasonable limit? Why can't there be certain expenditures?

26. Has anyone checked with the children that have gone all day? Have they been asked how they like it?
Do studies reflect how happy kids are in FDAD? Happiness-satisfaction very important. I don't want my kid to be unhappy starting school!

27. In the study where 24 of 35 children preferred half day every day, were the children going full days or half days?
They had six week trial at the end of a year and at that point, the students were asked. Cannot remember what they were attending at the time.
In some studies, teachers loved full day, alternate days because they accomplished more. Parent concerned with concentrated block of time.
Yes, if a child is sick on Tuesday and doesn't go to school again until Tuesday, he has missed way too long of a time span for learning.
FDAD requires putting 2 half days into 1 full. Kids can't accomplish as much-not same amount of time in one full day as half days because of lunch, naps, etc.

28. The regularity of school day most important. A child needs to know when going to prepare him for other years to come.
Yes, regularity important.

29. What brought initial issue up? I support the half day.
Weigh kids against tax dollar - I'll pay more taxes for my kids.

30. Evidence of a better system of alternate full days is not there. Needs real good proof, not just the money savings.
$21,500 not enough % of budget to justify risking the change - not enough evidence that it's as good or better.

31. How many here support change, how many don't?

32. Works part-time so child is confused on days when has to go to the sitter. Can't remember what day it is.

33. What is the emotional effect on these studies? Is progress through school equal to other students or not?

34. During holidays, some children will probably miss more than others. Will one class be further ahead than the other? Won't teacher have teaching problems then?

35. There must have been a lot of research done way back to have anyone change to begin with. Maybe get rid of some sports if need to cut money.

36. Who's on the committee: parents, teachers, or who?

37. The Board and Committee look at many problems in order to reach more children at lower cost. This is done constantly. We are not singling out just this area to cut back on.

38. Can the public vote on this? Is a referendum necessary? Have all teachers met with the School Board on this issue? Will they?

39. Many teachers on the committee have small children of their own.

40. What districts in the study are you always referring to?

41. What was the intention of the legislature to come with 5½% levy increase?

42. Levy limit is School Board's option of going to the public and asking them if they want to increase levy.

43. Isn't there some other way of cutting costs? Can sports be put into gym classes?

44. Want to hand vote. We elected the board members and are the taxpayers.

45. Respect the committee for trying to be unbiased about this. They are trying to get the most complete information.

46. Committee stepped outside and any teachers or whoever wanted to while took a hand vote.
Favor of staying with present half day-every day program. 52
Favor of change. 0
Some did not wish to vote as they have not made up their mind.

47. We have not much control as parents here tonight.

48. The School Board has the legal responsibility of making decisions. We are considering your opinions and judgments tonight to help us determine which is the best choice.

49. Where does the burden of proof lie in all of this? Does one program have to whow superior to the other?

50. A change can work but you have to have the parents support.
Agreed, must have the parent support.

51. Every day alternate; will it give us the savings you said? Will there be a change or additions to teaching staff? Will more aides be hired ? More facilities?

52. Can bus routes be switched so morning and afternoon in one route? Send out fewer buses somehow to cut costs.

Hearing was called to an end at 9:40 p.m.